

Legislative News



April 23, 2010

Plans to Reboot State Government Continue to Move Forward

The Senate passed two resolutions that could dramatically impact the structure of the state's education system this week. [Senator Charlie Shields' SJR 44](#), which would change the number of departments in the executive branch of government, received unanimous Senate approval after very little discussion on Thursday. Another resolution sponsored by Senator Shields, [SJR 45](#), was also passed by the Senate, but after more substantial debate.

Several different versions of SJR 45 were considered throughout the week. Each version would eliminate the [CBHE](#) and redesign the existing [State Board of Education](#). The new Board of Education would have the

authority to oversee K-12 and higher education. The different versions varied as to the number of board members and how they would be selected, as well as in terms of the powers of the new board.

The version of SJR 45 finally approved by the Senate provides for a six-member board. The resolution does not specify the requirements for board membership; previous versions would have specifically required representation from K-12, higher education, etc. The resolution also does not require geographical representation (i.e., one member from each congressional district or a similar proxy to guarantee that members represent each area of the state).

The resolution provides that the new board will have the power of "supervision of instruction in the public schools and coordination of public higher education." The board will also have the authority to select a commissioner of education, who will then be subject to the advice and consent of the Senate.

The resolution must now be considered by the House. If approved, it will be considered by voters, probably during the August primary election or the November general election. The changes in the resolution would take effect on July 1, 2011.



Burgeoning Bright Flight Bill Advances

[Senator David Pearce's SB 733](#), which originally extended the period that certain students who enter the military may defer [Bright Flight](#) awards, has grown substantially since it was introduced. The [Senate Education Committee](#) added language that clarifies several issues related to Bright Flight, such as the fact that home-school students and GED recipients may receive awards and when the "cut scores" for the ACT and SAT are established. Many of these changes simply codify existing [MDHE](#) prac-

tice. SB 733 was passed by the Senate. It has now been heard and approved by the [House Higher Education Committee](#), which tacked on additional new language. SB 733 now includes language originally contained in [HB 1473](#) ([Access](#) GPA requirement for lower-division students) and [HB 1812](#) and [SB 784](#) ([Access](#) award amount equalization). SB 733 now awaits consideration by the whole House during floor debate.

Budget Update: Conference Committee

On Thursday the conference committee completed its work on [HB 2003](#), resolving all outstanding issues and effectively putting the bill on the Governor's desk.

The major issues resolved in conference committee were the elimination of the \$6.5 million increase added by the House for [Bright Flight](#). The committee also took the lower position on [Access Missouri](#), carrying forward the entire \$13 million withholding from FY 2010. The option was available to provide \$6.5 million above the FY 2010 expenditure amount. In terms of the [MDHE](#) internal budget, the committee opted for the Senate position, which involved only nominal cuts (less than 2%) across each administrative area. There was no reduction in FTE authorization.

In other items:

- The committee removed the \$2 million for the [UM-MSU Pharmacy Doctorate program](#) that had been added by the House.

- The committee took the Senate position on [UM telehealth](#), cutting it by \$17,409 (10% of the general revenue remaining after the governor's reduction of approximately 25%).
- The committee took the Senate position on [MORENet](#), carrying forward the FY 2010 expenditure restriction of \$1,742,242 (20.3% of the amount remaining after the governor's reduction of approximately 33%).
- The committee took the Senate position on [UM Hospitals and Clinics](#), cutting \$939,437 (10% of the amount remaining after the Governor's reduction of approximately 25%).
- The committee took the Senate position on the [Missouri Institute of Mental Health](#), reducing this item by \$500,000 (50% of the amount remaining after Governor's reduction of approximately 40%).
- The committee took the Senate position on the [Missouri Kidney Program](#), cutting \$320,033 (10% of the amount remaining after the Governor's reduction of approximately 40%).
- The committee took the House position on the [State Historical Society](#), making no changes to the Governor's recommendation which was a reduction of approximately 16%.

The next step will be the usually uneventful adoption of the conference committee reports by each chamber, and then the entire budget will be sent to the Governor for his action.

Nixon Names New Appointments

Governor Nixon named two individuals to higher education-related boards this week. Dr. Mark Hargens was named to the [Northwest Missouri State University Board of Regents](#) and Dr. Carolyn Mahoney was named to the [Midwestern Higher Education Compact](#). The appointments are subject to Senate confirmation.



Access Award Amount Equalization Language Appears in 4 Bills



Much of the higher education-related discussion in the legislature this session has focused on the question of whether – and when – to equalize [Access Missouri](#) award amounts for students at public universities and private institutions. Language equalizing award amounts starting several years in the future was

included in Senators [Kurt Schaefer's](#) and [David Pearce's SB 784](#) and [Representative Gayle Kingery's HB 1812](#). Both of those bills have been voted out of committee but haven't been substantively debated on the floor.

Similar language has also shown up in [HB 1473](#), [Representative Mike Thomson's](#) bill that would change the GPA required for lower-division Access Missouri award recipients to receive renewal awards, and [SB 733](#), [Senator David Pearce's](#) bill that would clarify several issues related to [Bright Flight](#). HB 1473 was passed by the House after extensive debate on Tuesday, and SB 733 has been passed by the Senate and given first-round approval by the [House Higher Education Committee](#).

In these bills, award amounts would change starting in the 2014-15 academic year. Students at public universities, private institutions, and [Linn](#)

[State](#) would receive awards of \$1,500-\$2,850. Students at community colleges would receive awards of \$300-\$1,300. Most of the bills also remove the “sunset provision” from the Access Missouri statute, which provides for the program to terminate automatically in 2013 unless reauthorized by the General Assembly.

Several legislators have supported implementing award amount changes earlier than 2014-15. [Representative Mary Still](#) has offered amendments in committee and on the House floor that would have required the MDHE to begin providing students entering college in 2010 or 2011 with the new award amounts, effectively stair-stepping implementation of the change in. Representative Still's amendments were not successful.

Education Boards Meet in Jefferson City

Education leaders from around the state came together in Jefferson City this week to discuss the challenges facing the state. The events began with a meeting on Wednesday evening that included the [Coordinating Board for Higher Education](#), [State Board of Education](#), [Coordinating Board for Early Childhood](#), members of the Senate [2020 Educated Citizenry Committee](#), and House members.

On Thursday, all three boards met jointly. The main topic that was discussed throughout the meeting was the potential creation of a single board of education to oversee kindergarten through postsecondary education in Missouri. Members from all boards were given the opportunity to share their ideas about the poten-

tial creation of a single board and what its functions and make up would be.

After the joint meeting was completed, CBHE members met for their individual board meeting. At the end of their meeting, the CBHE released the following statement regarding the creation of a single board of education:

“The Coordinating Board for Higher Education (CBHE) strongly supports efforts to create a more effective education system for Missourians. The passage by the Missouri Senate of [SJR 45](#) is an important first step toward achieving this goal. The CBHE is committed to engaging with all interested parties in developing the final structure of a single board and defining

statutory details to ensure the needs of all postsecondary students are addressed.”

